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THE
HIGH CHURCHMAN
VINDICATED:

IN
A FOURTH CHARGE
TO THE
CLERGY.

OF THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN THE
STATE OF NEW-YORK,

At the opening of the Convention of the said Church, in Trinity
Church, in the City of New-York, on Thursday, Oct. 17, 1826.

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THE
HIGH CHURCHMAN VINDICATED;
A
CHARGE.

BRETHREN OF THE CLERGY,

THE truth that a visible society, called the Church, is made by Divine appointment the regular and ordinary channel by which the blessings of mercy, and grace, and eternal life, in Jesus Christ, are conveyed to a fallen world, must forcibly strike even the most superficial readers of the sacred volume. This is that "Church of the living God," which he, the Son of God, "purchased with his blood"—for which he "gave himself," which he "purifies and sanctifies," that he might "present it unto himself a glorious Church." Intimate and affectionate is the relation which subsists between the divine Redeemer and this spiritual society; for it is called "his spouse and his body." These are the forcible and endearing similitudes by which the Church of Christ was presented to us at the period when we were set apart to its service, as the great object which was to engage our labour, our care, our diligence, and our prayers.

For "the Holy Catholic Church," in which, with the other great articles of Christian doctrine, we pro-

fess our belief, we are taught in our public ritual to pray, that this divine and spiritual body, of which by baptism we were made members, may be "ruled and governed in the right way;" that it may be "inspired continually with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord;" that it may be "kept with God's perpetual mercy," "cleansed and defended with his continual pity," and "preserved evermore by his help and goodness;" that this, "God's household, may be kept in continual godliness, and, through his protection, devoutly given to serve him in good works;" that the "bright beams of light being cast upon it, it may walk in the light of God's truth, and at length attain unto everlasting life;" that "built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, it may always be preserved from false prophets, and be ordered and guided by faithful and true pastors;" that "every member of this holy Church, which is governed and sanctified by God's spirit, may, in his vocation and ministry, truly and godly serve him;" that all those who are without its holy pale, being in "ignorance, hardness of heart, or contempt of God's word, may be brought home to this his flock, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ the Lord;" that these "God's elect," those who are "called into a state of salvation," of visible covenant with him in this life, thus "knit together in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of his Son, may so follow the blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that thy may come to the unspeakable joys which God has prepared

for those who unfeignedly love him." These are among the varied and deeply touching supplications in which our Liturgy impresses on us the sacred character, and aim, and destination of the Church, and gives utterance to the fervent and devoted affection which it is supposed her members cherish for this "spouse," this "body" of the Redeemer, which, translated from its militant state here on earth, is to be that glorious Church triumphant, where the righteous are finally to be blessed with their everlasting reward.

One would think then, that he who loves supremely a spiritual and divine society, thus characterized in the sacred writings, and made with such inimitable pathos, the subject of our constant devotions in that ritual which best presents the spirit of those writings, our invaluable Liturgy; who loves this Church supremely, not assuredly in all the shapes into which human error, or caprice, or prejudice, or interest, hath moulded her, but as retaining in all essentials the doctrine, the ministry, the sacraments, and the worship* of those apostolic days, when the Lord "added to this his Church such as should be saved;" who loves her in that pure and glorious form in which she was originally established by Christ and his apostles, and devotes his fervent prayers, and in his vocation and ministry, his most zealous efforts to her advancement, is but furthering the plan which God has appointed for the salvation of mankind, and in this view presents

* They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts ii. 42.

the strongest claims to commendation, confidence, and support.

And yet the term CHURCHMAN, by which this character is appropriately designated, and especially the term HIGH CHURCHMAN, denoting an eminent degree of attachment to the essential characteristics of the Church, and zeal for their advancement—appellations dignified and honourable in their correct acceptation—sometimes expose him to whom they are applied to charges as unjust in their nature as they are injurious in their operation.

Into the causes of these charges it is not my intention to inquire. But it is due to the interests of that divinely constituted society, the characteristics of which *High Churchmen* profess to maintain, to expose the fallacy and injustice of these charges.

It is said that High Churchmen are *bigoted*. In this case, as in many others, the term is certainly used without understanding its real import. Bigotry cannot consist merely in maintaining exclusive opinions ; for then, in every department of science, natural, moral, and religious, he is a bigot who advocates correct theories in opposition to those he deems erroneous ; and the encomium of liberality is merited by him who thinks all opinions are alike. Bigotry respects not tenets in themselves, but the *spirit* in which they are held, and the *manner* and the *means* by which they are avowed and advanced. He who holds any opinions in that *spirit* of blind and inveterate prejudice which, imperfectly acquainted with the evidences of the correctness of those opinions, views with contempt and scorn all

opposing claims ; who avows and maintains those opinions in that unkind, dogmatic, and arrogant *manner* which depreciates the motives, or is unfair towards the merits of those who may differ from him ; or who, withholding from them the relative and social affections and duties, seeks to coerce them to his own sentiments, and thus to advance those sentiments by any other *means* than fair argument, and an honourable and candid policy—he, and he only is a bigot. In bigotry there is no monopoly, no exclusive possession. The *Low Churchman*, who depreciates the distinguishing characteristics of the Church, or is lukewarm or indifferent in advancing them, as well as the *High Churchman*, who exalts their importance, and is zealous in enforcing and defending them, may subject themselves to the imputation of bigotry, by the spirit, the manner, or the means by which they maintain their respective views. Even the liberal *Latitudinarian*, who widens the enclosures of charity, so as to embrace those who believe the most, and those who scarcely believe any thing, should be on his guard, lest in his opposition to those who, mindful of the divine injunction of “earnestly contending for the faith,” seek to discriminate truth from error, and thus to limit the range of their charity for *opinions*, though not for *men*, he may justly subject himself to the odium of the very bigotry which he thinks he is denouncing.

Is the charge of bigotry against the High Churchman founded on the fact, that in his efforts for propagating Christianity, and of extending the kingdom of Jesus Christ, he devotes himself to the extension of

his own Church exclusively? And if a correct spirit, manner, and means are cherished and employed by him, the imputation is unfair and unjust. He regards the Church which the Redeemer and his apostles founded, as subsisting under certain distinctive and essential principles of doctrine, ministry, sacraments, and worship. He regards his own Church (every duly constituted Protestant Episcopal Church) as possessing these essentials. In advancing then his own Church, he propagates, in his view, the Gospel as Christ and his apostles proclaimed it—he extends the kingdom and Church of Christ as they established and extended it. In what other way is it to be expected that he should propagate the Gospel, or extend the Church of Christ? He may highly respect the varying or opposing denominations of his fellow Christians, and respect individually their character and motives; honour their piety and zeal; cherish esteem for their virtues, and the utmost affection for their persons, and seek to be first among the foremost in the reciprocation of all the endearing charities of social and domestic life. But he remembers that his Redeemer declared, “he who loveth father, or mother, or wife, or children, or brother, or sister, more than me, is not worthy of me.” Hence the principle of supreme love to his Redeemer leads him to love supremely the Church in that form of doctrine, ministry, sacraments, and worship, under which he believes it was constituted by this its divine Head. He presumes not to arraign the fitness of the peculiar constitution of Christ’s mystical body; wisely and humbly judging that the divine Personage who came

to save the world, knew by what institutions this all-merciful object was best to be accomplished. So far indeed from confining salvation to a state of visible union with Christ's mystical body, he extends the benefits of the Redeemer's merits and grace to the pious and sincere of all sects, and of all nations. But a divine society being established as the regular and ordinary channel of salvation, his duty is plain—to unite himself to that society, and to seek to induce others sincerely to do so, that thus “joined together in one communion and fellowship,” they may be “an holy temple acceptable to the Lord.”

Is this the rhapsody of a High Churchman? No; my brethren of the Clergy, on this point let the charge of bigotry be imputed as it may, we stand pledged, most solemnly pledged. We set our hands to a precise declaration of conformity to the doctrines and *worship* of our own Church. On the tremendously awful occasion in which we declared our trust of being “called by the Holy Ghost to take upon ourselves the ministry,” we promised “always”—*always* (not a word in this holy engagement which has not the most emphatic meaning) “so to minister the doctrines and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church hath received the same”—and to “*teach* the people committed to our care and charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same.” And the ministry whom we promised to “obey,” whose “godly admonitions we promised to follow,” and to whose “godly judgments we promised to submit,” are “the Bishops and other

chief ministers who, according to the canons of the Church, may have the charge and government over us." There can be no doubt as to the particular mode by which the most solemn obligations which mortals can assume, or heaven sanction, bind us to seek the salvation of mankind, to glorify the holy name of our Lord and Saviour, who has called us to this high office of dignity, and to enlarge his blessed kingdom.

Allied to the charge of bigotry is the accusation of the love and the support of *arbitrary power*. The adage,

"Is he a Churchman? then he's fond of power,"

comes upon the ear in all the harmony of poetic numbers, and is received by some, perhaps, to whom the other lines of the aphorism would not sound so pleasant.

Doubtless, at a particular period of the history of the Church from which we are descended, the term High Churchman was associated with one which designated an attachment to political principles and views not favourable to the principles of freedom. And yet it is also certain, that in that nation, some of those who have been the strongest advocates of the monarchical features of the British constitution, entertained the lowest ideas with respect to the spiritual character and powers of the Church, and were most emphatically Low Churchmen. The truth is, there is no necessary connexion between any set of political and of

Church principles. The Christian Church, the depository and the dispenser to the nations of that salvation which is designed "for all people," in her spiritual character and powers is independent of the forms of human polity. She has flourished when persecuted by the rod, as when protected by the sceptre of the imperial throne—when sitting in dust and ashes, as when clothed with purple on the throne of the Cæsars. She does share the honours, the splendour, and the wealth of monarchy; and, thank God, she does shine forth in her native lustre, unadorned by the adventitious appendages of worldly greatness under the protecting care of a republic. And the warmest advocates of her legislative powers may be the devoted subjects of the one, and the grateful citizens of the other. The constitution of her ministry in that form in which the High Churchman advocates it, supposes the derivation of the authority to minister in holy things from the only source of power in the Christian Church, its divine Head. So far he agrees with almost all the denominations of his Christian brethren. The opinion peculiar to him is, that this authority flows from its divine source, through the channel of the *first* of the three orders of the ministry, which, "from the apostles' time have been in the Christian Church." Act on this principle, preserve to the three orders of the ministry their legitimate powers, impose on them no spiritual laws in the enacting of which they have not a full agency—and the High Churchman will permit you in all other respects to mould your ecclesiastical polity to suit the varying genius of human governments.

Happily the forms under which the government of our own Church is administered, recognizing all the essential principles of our free constitutions, are in more exact conformity with the admirable structure of our civil polity than those of any other denominations. What should hinder, then, that the highest Churchman may not consistently be the advocate of all which renders his country as happy as she is free?

But again; the High Churchman is accused of *formalism*.

Undoubtedly the advocate for any set of religious opinions may rest in speculation merely—may not bring them to act with exciting power upon the heart and the life. But assuredly there is no deadening influence in what are called High Church principles which prevents him who professes them from the most fervent and active exercise of the religious affections. He loves supremely the Church. Because it is the varying creature of human polity, the supple instrument of human ambition? No; but because she is “the spouse and body of the Redeemer,” for “which he gave himself,” for which he constantly “intercedes,” which he enriches and sanctifies with his spiritual gifts, for which he is preparing the triumphs of everlasting glory. These views of the relation which the Church bears to her divine Lord, when sincerely entertained and cherished, must excite and engage the warmest feelings of gratitude and devotion to that blessed Personage who thus distinguishes her. And this exciting and warming tendency cannot surely be

diminished or impeded by earnest endeavours to preserve her in all her peculiarities, in all her institutions, as she came forth from the hands of her divine Founder, as she was adorned by his divinely commissioned apostles—"well ordered in all things"—at "unity in herself"—"all glorious within, her clothing of wrought gold." Look at the long series of illustrious Clergymen and Laymen who have been foremost in advocating those principles which, in reference to the Church, distinguish those who are denominated High Churchmen. Select from them the venerated names of *Andrews*, of *Ken*, of *Stanhope*, of *Horne*, of *Jones*, among the Clergy; of *Nelson*, of *Wogan*, of *Waldo*, among the Laity. Listen to those strains which these primitive men poured forth, and which still cheer and warm the devout and pious soul, lifting its most fervid affections to heaven; and withdraw the imputation of the necessary connexion between High Church opinions and formalism.

The charge generally arises from the ardour, zeal, and vigilance with which the High Churchman guards the prescribed worship of the Church, condemns every departure from it, and resists every practice that may lower it in the estimation of the people, and gradually lead to its disuse. This prescribed worship, in the judgment of those who censure this rigid adherence to it—an adherence bound upon the Clergy by law—bound upon them by the additional tie of their most solemn promise—is most fervent and animating in all its devotions. Formalism would not seem a *necessary* result of a strong attachment to this Li-

turgy, of a scrupulous and wakeful guardianship of it. On the contrary, in proportion to the strength of this attachment, and to the degree of this vigilant guardianship must be the sense of obligation to enter into its revered and fervent spirit, and to imbibe its hallowed and animating unction. Where this effect does not result, it is only an evidence which human nature often exhibits, of an inconsistency between principles and practice. If, whatever may be the professions of respectful attachment to the Liturgy, which is prescribed on account of its scriptural and primitive sanctions, as well as its numerous advantages in opposition to extempore prayer, this latter mode be *sometimes* used on occasions of public social worship; if it be used especially on those occasions of the more select assemblages, where the object is to excite, to cherish, and to indulge more than ordinary religious sensibility, and where it is thought a more than ordinary degree of religious improvement and pious joy has been experienced, may not the High Churchman, who is zealous for this Liturgy, be excused if he opposes this inconsistent attempt to unite opposite modes of devotion? May he not be excused if, judging from what we know of human nature—judging from the recorded page of history, he deprecates this attempt as calculated ultimately to bring into disrepute and disuse that ritual which, though best fitted permanently and beneficially to satisfy and interest the understanding and the affections, is certainly not so well calculated as the extempore mode to rouse the animal sensibilities. But let every Churchman seriously reflect how far in

his own case this charge of formalism may be well founded ; and let him, in humble dependence on the quickening grace of God's Spirit, seek to engage with sincerity and devotedness in the use of the Liturgy ; and its holy and pious sentiments impressed upon his heart, and influencing his tempers and his conduct, there will be full evidence that he is controlled by the life and power of godliness.

Another charge against the High Churchmen is, that they are *not evangelical*.

Let us ascertain the meaning of this much used, and, I must say, much abused term. It is claimed by those who hold the peculiar tenets of Calvinism. It is claimed by, or it is applied to those in our own Church who, while they profess more than usual fidelity in preaching what they consider the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, insist little on the distinctive principles of the Church, especially in reference to the ministry, and are less tenacious than others of her liturgical services, and irregular in the use of them. And it properly denotes those who preach in all respects the doctrines of the Gospel which are emphatically "good tidings."

It would be difficult to prove the correctness of the claim of those to be "evangelists," *preachers of good tidings*, who confine the redemption of the Gospel to only a portion of the fallen race who need it. In this application of the term, however, the charge of not being evangelical is not correct as it respects *some* High Churchmen in former days. For undoubtedly

at one period of the English Church, many of those divines who most ably asserted the high pretensions of Episcopacy, were what are styled doctrinal Calvinists—holding the peculiar tenets of Calvinism, but not much insisting on them. How they could maintain these tenets consistently with the articles and other standards of their Church, which on every point of Calvinism but one, expressly contradicts them, and on that one falls very far short of its assertions, it is foreign to my present object to inquire. These High Church Calvinists were probably biassed in their religious sentiments by the great Reformer Calvin, and by their intimate connexions with the Calvinistic divines of the Continent.

In the application of the term evangelical to those who, professing extraordinary fidelity in asserting the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, insist little on the distinctive principles of the Church, and depart from her established ritual, most certainly, High Churchmen disclaim it. The Church they consider as a society divinely constituted—its ministry divinely commissioned by God's providence and Holy Spirit, in those three orders that distinguish it as Episcopal. Union with this Church, as the mystical body of Christ, by its ministrations and ordinances, they regard as the divinely prescribed mode of union with its divine Head, assuring to the *faithful* all the blessings of redemption and grace, which Christ purchased for his mystical body. The liturgical mode of worship appears to them sanctioned by Scripture, by primitive usage, by its decided utility, as securing sound doc-

trine, and a correct, impressive, dignified, enlightened, and fervent devotion. The Liturgy of their own Church they revere and love as furnishing in its matter, its arrangement, and its language, an unrivalled form of public social devotion; as promulgating in "the clearest, plainest, most affecting and majestic manner," the great truths of the Gospel; and as cherishing those truths, and sealing them on the understanding and the heart, by embodying them with the devotions of her members. The pre-eminent importance of this Liturgy, its numerous excellencies attach to it the dictates of their judgments, and the affections of their hearts. The laws of the Church and their own solemn promises bind it upon their conscience. There appears to them but one course of duty and expediency—a scrupulous and sacred adherence to it. And they earnestly deprecate a departure from it, by omissions of its parts, and by the introduction of extempore devotions, not merely as forbidden by the most solemn considerations of duty, and as inconsistent with a sincere attachment to it, but as inevitably resulting in depreciating its importance in the estimation of the people, and thus preparing them for its total disuse. They consider the term evangelical as greatly misapplied to those who lay but little stress on the regular ministrations and ordinances of that mystical body of Christ, which convey to *believers* the benefits of his cross and passion; or who, moulding that Liturgy which correctly and powerfully proclaims the great doctrines of the Gospel to their own views, or

disfiguring it by their own prayers, are weakening its hold upon public esteem, affection, and confidence.

In the *correct sense* of the term, High Churchmen disclaim the imputation of not being evangelical. It is only when faithless to their principles that they are not pre-eminently so. Are they distinguished by their zeal for the Church in the ministrations and ordinances annexed to it by Christ and his apostles? But it is the only object of these ministrations and ordinances, to excite and to cherish a lively and holy faith in the atoning merits of the Son of God, who gave himself for this Church; and to convey to the soul the quickening and sanctifying influences of the divine Spirit which animates this mystical body of the Redeemer; and thus to assure to the faithful that they are "heirs through hope of God's heavenly kingdom." Pardon, justification, eternal life, as the free gift of God the Father, through the merits and intercession of his eternal Son, and through the renovating and sanctifying agency of the Holy Ghost—these are the great evangelical truths which alone render of value or of efficacy, the ministrations and ordinances for which the High Churchman contends—and which so deeply pervade that Liturgy which he cherishes with a sacred affection, only inferior to that with which he regards the inspired volume. These then are the truths which, faithful to his principles, he must most ardently cherish, most strenuously and zealously inculcate. *Evangelical the High Churchman must be*, or, in contending for the Church and Liturgy, he will prove either that he

understands not their nature, their excellencies, their divine and spiritual objects; or that the deep guilt of inconsistency with the most sacred principles, and of an indifference in the most important of all interests, the salvation of the soul, rests upon his conscience.

As long as from the imperfection of the human understanding, and the strength of the human passions, varying and erroneous opinions in religion prevail, different appellations must necessarily designate different bodies of Christians. He shows that he is but little acquainted with human nature, who declaims against the use of them. *High Churchmen* then, in the view which has been exhibited of it, is that term which designates those who insist on the ministrations and ordinances of the Church, as constituted by Christ and his apostles, because they are the means and pledges to the faithful of that salvation which is derived through the merits, and intercession, and sanctifying grace of a divine Redeemer; and who love and adhere to the Liturgy as embodying and powerfully exhibiting evangelical truth and duty in the purest and most fervent language of devotion.

Is *High Churchmen* then, brethren of the Clergy, an appellation of which we should be ashamed? No! Let it be our boast. Unpopular it can be, only as it is misunderstood. The principles which it covers, are those of the first and purest ages of Christianity, of the age of apostles, of martyrs, and of confessors. The time will come, when those who have professed it through good report and through evil report, will be held in grateful honour. For the errors and heresies

that deform the fair face of Christianity, can be corrected, under God, only by the principles and the policy of High Churchmen. At that period when the discordant sects that now divide and distract the Christian family, profess with "one heart the faith delivered to the saints," and with "one mouth glorify God," the principles professed, the feelings cherished, the language uttered, will be the principles, the feelings, and the language of High Churchmen.

In advocating and asserting these principles then, we fulfil the duty which we owe to our divine Lord in the extension of his blessed kingdom—a duty enhanced in importance as it will be in its rewards, by the present difficulties that oppose the discharge of it. Even if worldly estimation were our object, what comparison is there between that loud but superficial applause which follows a temporizing and accommodating profession of the distinguishing principles of that Church whose ministry we cannot have assumed, but with the intention and certainly with the vow of fidelity to her; and that secret but powerful homage of the candid and the upright, which their hearts involuntarily offer to the consistent, the firm, and the undeviating Churchman. No human encomium can be more enviable than that pronounced by the first Bishop of Calcutta, the lamented *Middleton*, on the great champion of the faith and primitive order, to which High Churchmen are devoted—you anticipate the name of *Horsley*—that he "run a glorious but unpopular career in the midst of an heretical and apostate age." But, brethren of the Clergy, let us

not lower our high view from the exalted motives that present themselves in that heaven where is to be our judgment and our great reward, to the petty and evanescent favours of this perishing world.

I have deemed it my duty to call your most serious attention to the topics which I have now laid before you. Much and solicitous observation has satisfied me that correct as our own Diocese as yet is *generally* in all these particulars, our Church is in no small danger from practices that assail the integrity, and impair the efficacy of her Liturgy; from the generally increasing spread of indifference to her distinctive principles; and from the extensive operation of measures that are calculated to render those principles odious, to keep them out of view, or to bear them down. It is the duty of Christians to receive from one another, and from their Pastors, the word of exhortation. It is the duty of Christian Ministers, as occasion offers, to admonish one another. And certainly it is the higher duty of the Christian Bishop to exhort and admonish those of whom God has given him the oversight.

What effect the course of remarks which I have submitted to you may have on my general popularity, is a question which ought to have but comparatively little weight with me. I avowed and advocated these principles at a period when popularity comes decked to the youthful bosom in her most attractive charms. And pursued through the succeeding stages of my ministerial and episcopal course, I ought not, cherishing an increased idea of their truth and importance, and of the danger to which they are exposed, to shrink

from enforcing them at a period when some serious monitions of my uncertain hold on life, and when much longer experience of the world have brought, with greater force on the mind, the truth of the declaration, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," stamped upon all objects and all motives not sanctioned by the grace and hopes of the Gospel of Christ. Next to that support which is always inspired by the consciousness of integrity, I have been fortified and cheered by the general confidence, as I have thought, of my Diocese, and by the humble hope that the cause of God and his Church has not suffered in my hands.

May this humble hope cheer and fortify us all, my brethren; and God of his mercy grant that when removed from the errors, the toils, and the conflicts which assail us in his Church militant on earth, we may, at the consummation of all things, enter into rest; and in his Church triumphant unite in ceaseless praises to him, the Lord our God, our Saviour and Redeemer.



